

Revivals And Church History :: Andrew Murray and the Holy Spirit Revival

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<http://www.anabaptistchurch.org/AndrewMurray.htm>

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Andrew Murray was born on May 9th, 1828 in a Dutch Reformed parsonage in South Africa. In 1838, at the age of ten, Andrew left home with his brother John to study in Scotland. The two brothers were ordained at The Hague on Andrew's twentieth birthday, leaving soon afterwards to begin their work in South Africa.

In 1860 Andrew Murray accepted a call to pastor the church at Worcester. His induction to the church coincided with a revival and missions conference made up of 374 South African ministers. The conference was planned for the specific purpose of encouraging spiritual revival and recruiting new workers and missionaries for the Dutch Reformed churches of South Africa.

Shortly after the conference, a meeting of young people was held at the church on a Sunday evening. It was at this meeting that the Spirit of revival unexpectedly broke out. The meeting moved along as expected, until an unassuming 15-year-old black girl stood up to pray. Mr. Murray's associate, J. C. deVries, was overseeing the prayer meeting and gives us an eyewitness account of these extraordinary events. "On a certain Sunday evening there were gathered in a little hall some sixty young people. I was the leader of the meeting, which began with a hymn and a lesson from God's Word, after which I prayed. Three or four others gave out a verse of a hymn and prayed, as was the custom.

Then a colored girl of about fifteen years of age, in service with a nearby farmer, rose at the back of the hall and asked if she too might propose a hymn. At first I hesitated, not knowing what the meeting would think, but better thoughts prevailed, and I replied, 'Yes.' She gave out her hymn-verse and prayed in moving tones. While she was praying, we heard, as it were, a sound in the distance, which came nearer and nearer, until the hall seemed to be shaken; with one or two exceptions, the whole meeting began to pray, the majority in audible voice, but some in whispers. Nevertheless, the noise made by the concourse was deafening. A feeling, which I cannot describe, took possession of me..."

While this meeting was going on, Andrew Murray was preaching in another section of the church. He was not present during the beginning of these events. When his own service was over, an elder passed the door of the prayer meeting, heard the noise, peeked in, and then ran back to get Mr. Murray.

J. C. deVries vividly recalls Murray's surprising reaction to the young people's meeting, "Mr. Murray came forward to the table where I knelt praying, touched me, and made me understand that he wanted me to rise. He then asked me what had happened. I related everything to him. Then he walked down the room for some distance and called out as loudly as he could, 'People, silence!' But the praying continued. In the meantime, I knelt down again. It seemed to me that if the Lord was coming to bless us, I should not be upon my feet but on my knees. Mr. Murray then called loudly again, 'People, I am your minister, sent from God! Silence!' But there was no stopping the noise. No one heard him, but all continued praying and calling on God for mercy and pardon. Mr. Murray then returned to me and told me to start the hymn-verse commencing 'Aid the soul that helpless cries'. I did so. But the emotions were not quieted and the meeting went right on praying. Mr. Murray then prepared to depart, saying, 'God is a God of order, and here everything is confusion!' With that he left the hall."

Prayer meetings were spontaneously organized every evening after that. The order of these meetings was usually the same each time, although no one set it. At the beginning there was generally great silence; no efforts were made to stir up emotions, but after the second or third prayer the gathering would suddenly begin to simultaneously cry out in prayer. This was definitely not the custom of the Dutch Reformed churches at that time, nor did anyone ever teach them to do this. Sometimes the gathering would continue until three in the morning; even then, many wished to stay longer. As the people returned to their homes in the middle of the night they went singing joyously through the streets.

The revival shook the entire countryside. The young and old, rich and poor, blacks and whites were all equally affected by the revival. "It was quite amazing that the awakening was not confined to the towns and villages, but felt in totally isolated places without outside contacts, even on remote farms, where men and women were suddenly seized with emotions

to which they had been utter strangers a few weeks or even days before." People were frequently gripped with intense conviction. Strong men cried out in anguish while others fell to the ground unconscious and had to be carried out of the meetings.

J. C. deVries gives us a further account of Mr. Murray's difficulty in accepting these manifestations as from God. J. C. deVries writes, "On the first Saturday evening in the larger meeting-house, Mr. Murray was the leader. He read a portion of Scripture, made a few observations on it, engaged in prayer, and then gave others the opportunity to pray. During the prayer, which followed his, we heard again the same sound in the distance. It drew nearer and nearer and then suddenly the whole gathering was praying. That evening a stranger had been standing at the door from the beginning of the meeting, watching the proceedings. Mr. Murray descended from the platform and again moved up and down among the people, trying to quiet them. The stranger then tiptoed forward from the door, touched Mr. Murray gently, and said in English, 'I think you are the minister of this congregation. Be careful what you do, for it is the Spirit of God that is at work here. I have just come from America, and this is precisely what I witnessed there.'"

Andrew Murray had been offended by the intense outbursts of emotional praying, and sought unsuccessfully to control and calm the meetings. However, after this incident he apparently stopped trying to manhandle the Holy Spirit. He learned to accept these sudden outbursts of prayer and strong emotions as the work of God.

Mr. Murray's expectations about proper church order and that of the Holy Spirit's were obviously quite different. Broken expectations, if left unchecked, can lead to confusion, frustration and even harsh criticism. When the crowd in Jerusalem rushed to observe the miracle of Pentecost, Acts 2: 6 notes that many of the onlookers were "CONFUSED". These feelings of confusion obviously caused some to become offended, resulting later in them openly ridiculing the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:6-13). Mr. Murray's new revival experiences eventually taught him not to judge every seemingly confusing situation as the result of a lack of proper order.

Andrew Murray died in 1917. He was a prolific teacher on the subject of prayer and the deeper, Spirit-filled life, publishing some 240 books between 1858 and 1917. He stresses PRAYER, HOLINESS and POWER!

Some links to articles by Andrew Murray:

[The Spirit and the Flesh](#)

[The Spirit of Christ](#)

[The Prayer Life by Andrew Murray](#)

Re: Andrew Murray and the Holy Spirit Revival , on: 2009/12/18 23:31

Good article brother. When you read the accounts of the Welsh revival , you see the exact same thing. Prayer meetings where the Lord gets to speak through whoever He wishes. Its strange that even "experts," in revival today would still do the same as Murray, given the same circumstances.....Frank